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## SHORTCOMINGS OF USSR PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

Lately, several serious criticisms have been directed at the system of planning administrations (Glavproyekt), and particularly at Giprostroymaterialy (State Institute for Planning Construction Materials Enterprises), one of the largest planning institutes.

This criticism was brought about, first, by the fact that in the current year, during which the volume of capital construction has greatly increased, planning organizations lagged behind noticably in supplying construction drafts because of delays and poor quality of work.

There undoubtedly is some truth in the explanations given for this lag by the directors of planning organizations, such as the shortage of qualified personnel, the lack of adequate space, and irregularity of orders, which often are slow in arriving and thus delay the examination of planning documents, etc. Nevertheless, the main cause of the current lag can be traced to the organizational turmoil that exists in these organizations.

The organization of Giprostroymaterialy can be cited as an example. Up to this time, the Glavproyekt has not attempted to determine definitely what departments must be set up in the institute and what each of these departments is required to do. While complaining about the lack of qualified personnel, the directors of the institute do not even try to apportion and utilize the existing personnel. No one is actually concerned with the organization of the planning process itself. The fact is made evident by an examination of the position that has been delegated to chief engineers of a project.

With few exceptions, chief engineers do not concern themselves with the technical and construction aspects or other important questions concerning the project. They do not participate in actual planning and do not make any decisions; instead of the creative activity they are capable of performing, they act as registrars. All technical questions are decided by functional departments, e.g., by technological, construction and other departments. The chief



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engineers merely make up charts of the distribution of plans drawn up by the functional departments. Thus, the chief engineer of a project, who by right should be the central figure in organizing the process of technical planning, is not included in this work at all.

The shortage of specialists is said to be the main cause for concentrating the work in functional departments, where the same planners work on several enterprises at once.

The proponents of the functional system of planning insist that by concentrating all construction specialists in one department, and technologists in another, it is easier to manipulate the existing labor supply and to eliminate disruptions of production. However, it seems that disruptions are a constant occurrence under this system.

Under the functional system the work is started by technologists. Their assignment is then referred to construction specialists. However, soon thereafter it is discovered that the original assignment requires revisions and the material then is transferred back and forth between the two groups until desired changes are attained. Upon conclusion of this procedure, assignments are prepared for other specialists such as sanitation technicians, power technicians, and electrical technicians who, in turn, discover that both the technologists and the construction specialists have overlooked a number of specifications, and, as a result, the material is again transferred back and forth. All this is accompanied by bureaucratic correspondence between departments -- a process consuming a tremendous amount of time.

It is obvious that such a system precludes any kind of specialization. In planning brick, plaster, or housing construction plants, technologists, construction specialists, electrical, and other specialists usually are forced to spend more time in studying the project than in actual planning. It is hardly possible for a chief engineer to direct the formation of a plan when at the same time he is forced to direct the work in enterprises of various branches of industry.

The following are actual examples of such occurrences: Two engineers of Giprostroymaterialy are detailed to plan the operation of brick and ceramics plants. At the same time, one of them is chief engineer of three and the other of two woodworking combines. Still another engineer in the same organization is assigned to plan the work of six paper roofing plants and at the same time is chief engineer for two asbestos plants and one wood-fiber sheeting plant. Still another engineer is in charge of planning two brick, one slag materials, one ceramics, one gypsum, and one sanitary equipment plant. It is perfectly obvious that no chief engineer, no matter how able, can at the same time direct the planning of several entirely different projects.

It seems that the planning system currently in force in organizations of planning administrations is unsatisfactory and should be basically revised. The nucleus of a planning organization should consist of a creative group with a chief engineer in charge who will be entrusted with working out the complex technical details of the project and who will be held fully responsible for its quality and the date of its completion.

Along with the chief engineer, there should be appointed for the duration of the project a chief technologist, architect, designer, thermo-power technician, sanitation technician, and other specialists who are needed to work on planning the project.

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It will be necessary to establish complex departments in Giprostroymaterialy to plan enterprises in various branches of the construction materials industry. Every director of such a complex department, as well as the chief engineers, must be held fully responsible for certain branches of the industry. It is also desirable to have in the institute a chief architect, a chief-designer, and a chief-electrical technician to coordinate the work between complex departments and technical directors.

Such a system will fully utilize technical knowledge and experience and will simplify and speed up the planning process. Above all, it will eliminate the lack of responsibility that exists when functional departments are not held strictly responsible.

The experiences of the Promstroyproyekt (Construction Planning of Industrial Enterprises) Institute of the Ministry of Construction of Heavy Industry Enterprises illustrate the superiority of a "complex" planning system. Chief engineers of a project are on the department staff; they organize and direct all planning work and assume full responsibility for its quality and completion on schedule. The results of such coordination in the Promstroyproyekt Institute have been extremely satisfactory.

Giprostroymaterialy has more than 600 planners, making it an organization capable of solving major problems. The most important task is to eliminate all managerial irresponsibility, to distribute and utilize the existing personnel properly, and to entrust individuals with full responsibility for each project.

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